



Date: September 14, 2015

To: Thomas Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
From: Constance Stancil, Director, NIS Department
Subject: Request to Establish the Mayor's Hispanic- Latino Committee
Official Committee of the City of Durham

Executive Summary

The Mayor's Hispanic-Latino Committee (MHLC) seeks to become an official City of Durham Committee. The main objective of the MHLC is to work as a liaison and a consultative body between the Hispanic/Latino residents and City government officials to promote and protect equal opportunities on behalf of the Hispanic-Latino community in Durham. The MHLC seeks to improve opportunities and open doors for Hispanic/Latino Americans through civic engagement and by promoting the interests and needs of the Hispanic/Latino communities of Durham. With the increasing number of Hispanic-Latino residents in Durham, it is important for the City to have a group that can serve as a liaison to assist with community issues and to assist residents with better understanding the City services.

This agenda item includes the following: (1) MHLC by-laws (2) MHLC brochure (3) proposed agency member list.

Anabel Rosa, MHLC Organizational Committee Chair will be available to answer questions as needed from the Mayor and City Council members.

Recommendation

The Human Relations Division of the Neighborhood Improvement Services Department recommends that the Mayor's Hispanic-Latino Committee be recognized as an official committee of the City of Durham.

Background

The Mayor's Hispanic-Latino Committee was organized in 2002 to assist Hispanic-Latino residents to better understand City services. It was also created as a result of an ice storm which revealed that some Hispanic-Latino residents needed to be educated on the appropriate use of charcoal grills since many had never used them in their respective countries. As a result, some new residents were using them inside the house and this resulted in a tragedy. Carbon monoxide detectors were circulated throughout several Hispanic-Latino communities after this incident. In addition at this time, there was quite a bit of conflict between the black and Hispanic-Latino residents in several communities. It also became clear that the City needed to hire Hispanic-Latino employees to better communicate with residents due to the language barrier. As a result of recommendations by the MHLC, the City moved forward to recruit and hire Hispanic-Latino employees in various departments. In

2011, the MHLC was recognized for their progressive initiatives by the National League of Cities in their publication entitled "Municipal Innovations in Immigration Integration: 20 Cities, 20 Good Practices." While the Mayor's Hispanic Latino Committee has been active off and on since 2002, the MHLC has never been officially recognized as a City of Durham Committee. A year ago, the MHLC Organizational committee began meeting to revisit the former structure and to discuss the current needs that were most relevant to the Hispanic-Latino community. As a result, the Committee updated the mission, role and purpose of the organization and developed by-laws and are requesting to be established as an official Committee of the City of Durham.

Attachments:

MHLC By-laws

MHLC Brochure

Proposed Agency Members List